

**Secret**

25X1



DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *WEEKLY SUMMARY*

## *Special Report*

### *Insurgency in Mozambique*

State Dept. review  
completed

**Secret**

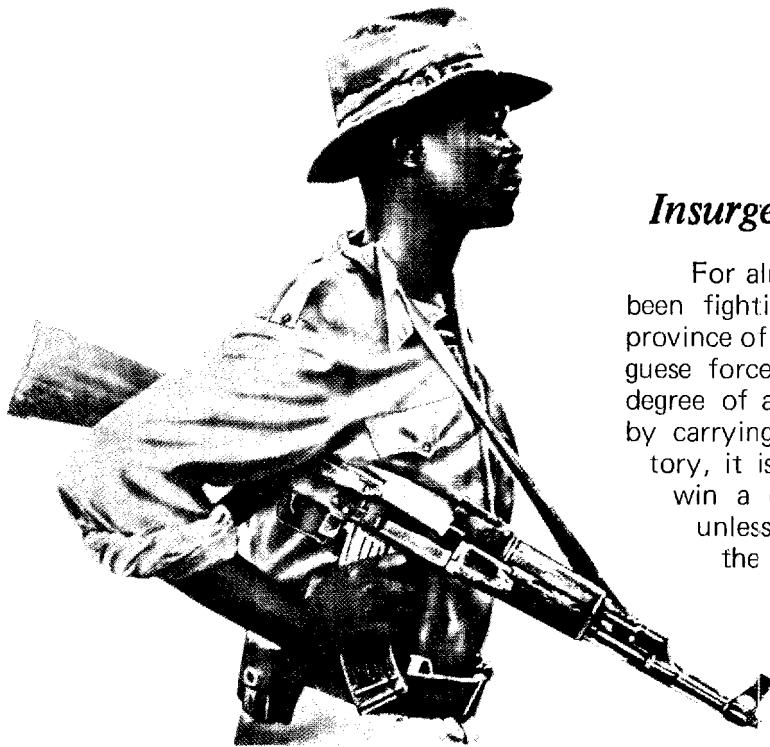
Nº 40

13 August 1971  
No. 0383/71A

**Page Denied**

SECRET

25X1



### *Insurgency in Mozambique*

For almost seven years, Portugal has been fighting insurgency in its African province of Mozambique. Although Portuguese forces have exhibited a surprising degree of aggressiveness in the past year by carrying the fight into guerrilla territory, it is apparent that Lisbon cannot win a conventional military victory unless it deprives the guerrillas of the external support provided by black African states, especially Tanzania and Zambia.

Portugal is not likely to mount a military effort against these states, however, because of its limited resources and the political furor that would ensue.

Nevertheless, Lisbon is firmly committed to maintaining its presence in Mozambique and is resigned therefore to a long-term struggle. Faced with the impracticality of attacking guerrilla sanctuaries across Mozambique's borders, Portugal believes that its best bet is to keep insurgency confined to remote, unimportant areas of the province. Over the short term, it can take comfort in the fact that its offensive last year hurt the insurgents and that a continuation of the offensive—currently under way—is likely to give Portuguese forces the upper hand for the present.

Special Report

- 1 -

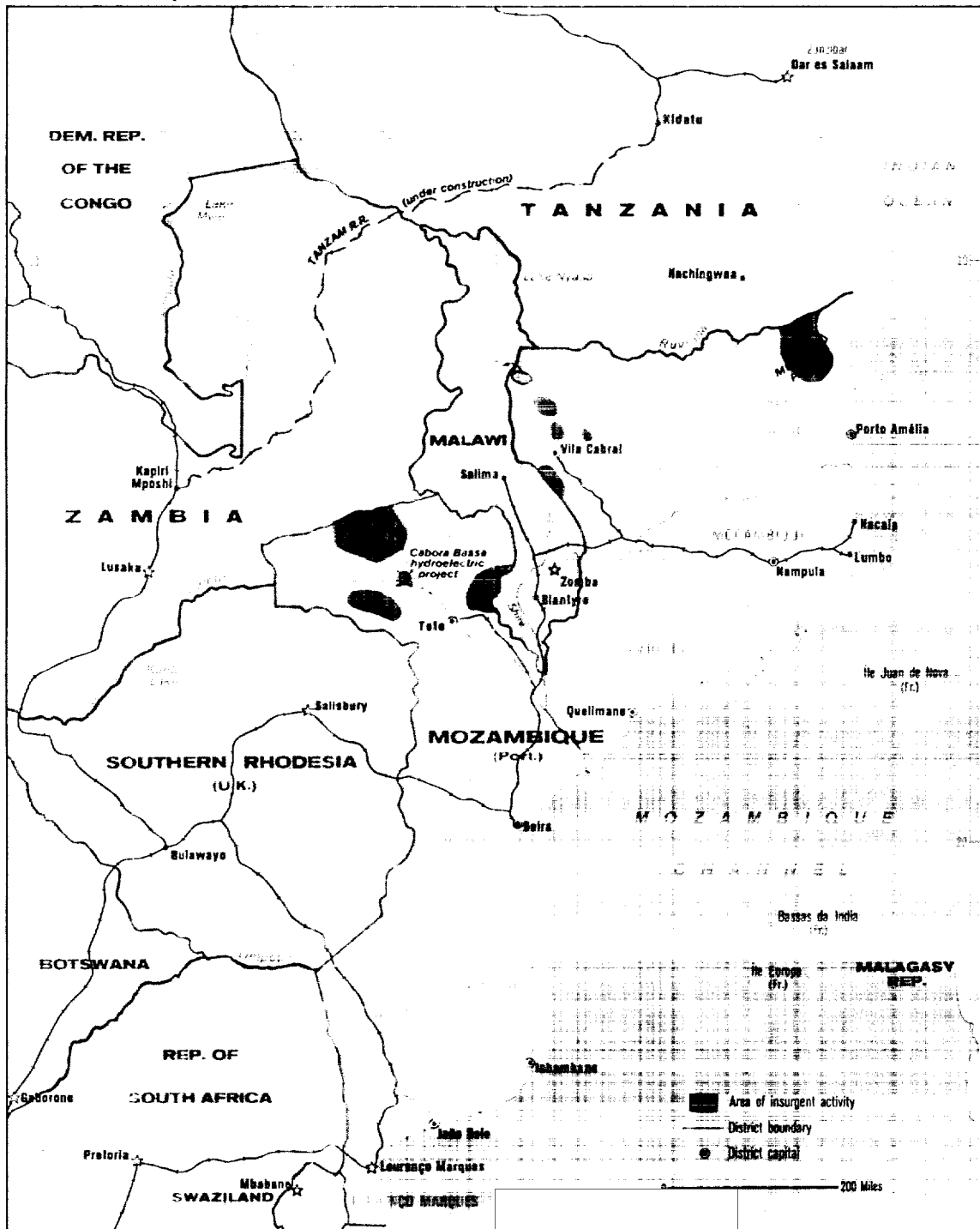
13 August 1971

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

## MOZAMBIQUE



500522 7-71 CIA

25X1

Special Report

- 2 -

13 August 1971

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

*Background*

The Mozambique nationalist movement dates back to the early 1960s, when a number of small exile groups were established in Tanganyika, Kenya, and Northern Rhodesia to prepare the Mozambican population for eventual armed struggle against Portuguese colonial rule. The nuclei of these groups were native Mozambicans educated in Lisbon or elsewhere abroad and caught up in the rising tide of nationalism in southern Africa.

The Portuguese stepped up their suppression of opposition political activity in the African territories after rebellion broke out in Angola in 1961. This hampered the development of a nationalist movement within Mozambique, but had little effect on the development of exile organizations. In June 1962, several of these organizations merged to form the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) with headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Under the leadership of its first president, the late Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, FRELIMO called for the elimination of Portuguese rule in Mozambique and for the establish-

ment of an independent, black-ruled, single-party state.

FRELIMO initiated armed insurgency against the Portuguese in September 1964, when about 250 guerrillas slipped across the Ruvuma River from Tanzania and quickly established a foothold in the extreme northeast of Cabo Delgado District. By early 1965, FRELIMO had set up several sizable base camps and a supply network that ran from Tanzania into Cabo Delgado. It had organized a small force in Niassa District and was making limited forays into Zambezia and Tete districts. Once having established this foothold, however, further expansion was held back by a lack of manpower and materiel. For the next several years, FRELIMO's leaders directed most of their efforts toward recruiting and training cadre, and canvassing African and Western sources for arms and supplies. Insurgent tactics in Mozambique during these years followed a pattern of harassment and small-unit, hit-and-run operations. Open confrontations with Portuguese troops were avoided in favor of ambushes of patrols and supply convoys, as well as terrorism against local inhabitants.



**FRELIMO soldiers placing mines  
in Cabo Delgado Province**

Portuguese troops—who numbered about 20,000 throughout the province—made only a limited response designed simply to contain the insurgents. Little effort was made to carry the fighting into guerrilla territory, largely because of a weak command structure, inadequate logistics, and a general unfamiliarity with unconventional warfare. Portuguese policy was essentially that of maintaining a cordon militaire along the periphery of insurgent territory, a strategy that kept Portuguese casualties down to an acceptable level, about ten per month.

*FRELIMO Pushes Out*

During the first three months of 1968, the frequency—although not the strength—of

SECRET

SECRET

25X1



FRELIMO freedom fighters preparing to ambush

FRELIMO ambushes and small-unit probes in Cabo Delgado showed a sharp increase. FRELIMO stepped up its use of road and antipersonnel mines as well as its mortar attacks on military outposts and fortified villages. Portuguese casualties were unusually heavy during this period (68 killed, three times the quarterly average) even though the rainy season runs roughly from December to May and Portuguese patrols are held to a minimum.

The increase in FRELIMO's activity during this period seems to have been largely intended to draw attention away from its move into Tete District. Shortly after the end of the rainy season in the spring of 1968, FRELIMO began operations there and by August

25X1

#### *Cabora Bassa: A Major Target*

Since then Tete has become the focal point of FRELIMO activity. The true extent of operations there has been glossed over by the Portuguese, however, because of their sensitivity over FRELIMO's ability to open up a new front and their concern for the security of the \$300-million plus Cabora Bassa hydroelectric project.

This project, now in the initial stages of construction, will cut across the Cabora Bassa gorge on the Zambezi River, about 80 miles upstream from the district capital. It was originally promoted as a means of accelerating agricultural, industrial, and mineral development along the Zambezi, but the full scope has been temporarily restricted in favor of producing electricity, primarily for export to South Africa, whose agreement to purchase large blocks of power has made the project economically feasible for the financially strapped Portuguese, who are depending on multinational financing to develop the project. In terms of ultimate capacity, Cabora Bassa will be able to generate more electricity than the combined output of Egypt's Aswan Dam and the joint Rhodesian-Zambian Kariba project.

FRELIMO leaders realize that the Cabora Bassa project will open new areas to settlement and development, and thus strengthen the ability of the Portuguese to hold on to the province. The guerrillas view the disruption of development in Tete as absolutely necessary if they are to weaken Lisbon's will to remain in Mozambique.

Lisbon's determination to make the project succeed as a symbol of Portugal's durability and power in Africa is, however, as strong as FRELIMO's desire to make it fail. Within the past two years, the military has committed some 5-6,000 troops to Tete, augmented by several hundred militia and special troops. The construction site itself is protected behind a series of concentric defense perimeters extending out some 18 miles. Workers are recruited from Mozambique's southern districts, which have been untouched by the insurgency, and they are carefully screened for any links with the north.

The importance the Portuguese attach to Tete was underscored in May of this year when Lisbon centralized military control over the counterinsurgency effort in the district by combining the posts of military commander and district governor under an army general officer. The district has also been reorganized as a semiautonomous military zone, and the Portuguese plan to commit

Special Report

- 4 -

13 August 1971

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

**FRELIMO**

Despite some internal disagreement, FRELIMO has grown steadily from its inception under the unifying leadership and political tutelage of US-educated Eduardo Mondlane. Mondlane's assassination in February 1969

aggravated intraparty conflicts and led to a period of severe factional infighting. This lasted until May 1970, when FRELIMO's military commander, Samora Machel, was named acting president. Under his guidance and astute military ability, FRELIMO has regained much of its momentum.

In 1968, FRELIMO leaders claimed to have well over 8,000 armed followers. Although that figure may be close to FRELIMO's total membership, it is doubtful that the organization has more than 4,000 armed insurgents in the field at any given time. The others are at training, educational, and headquarters facilities in Tanzania, studying abroad, or operating branches in various African and European capitals.

Support has come from a wide variety of sources and in many forms. The African Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity has provided more than \$200,000 over the past seven years. The bulk of FRELIMO's military aid comes from Communist China and the Soviet Union, which have supplied modern small arms as well as light and heavy machine guns, mortars, bazookas, rocket launchers, and even several small anti-aircraft guns that have been in limited use since 1968. The Chinese have also provided some twenty instructors for FRELIMO's training camps in Tanzania, while the USSR has accepted both combatants and medical personnel for training.

Western sources have also made contributions, primarily for humanitarian purposes. Over the past several years, the Swedish Government has provided about \$70,000, and in July 1970 the Danish Government announced a grant of \$27,000. These funds, channeled through the UN High Commission for Refugees, have gone for nonmilitary supplies such as medicines and clothing, and for the maintenance of the Mozambique Institute, FRELIMO's educational arm in Dar es Salaam. The Ford Foundation, which underwrote the initial costs of the institute, and other private US organizations have continued to give modest contributions. In addition, a number of FRELIMO students have scholarships to various US universities.

Special Report

- 5 -

13 August 1971

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

an additional two battalions there in the near future.

Portuguese authorities have maintained strict security on the extent of insurgent activity in the area. This, plus the reorganization, has led to much speculation by both local inhabitants and

#### STRENGTH ESTIMATES (1971)

PORTUGAL		FRELIMO	
Total: 54,500*		Total: 8,000	
Army**	43,000	Field strength:	
Navy	3,500	Cabo Delgado	4,000
Air Force	3,500	Tete	1,100
Public Police	4,000	Niassa	800
Secret Police	500		

\*does not include several thousand local militia

\*\*approximately 35% locally recruited

foreign observers that FRELIMO is stronger in Tete than the Portuguese are willing to admit in public. A Portuguese military bulletin issued in late April of this year, however, predicted increased insurgent activity with the advent of the dry season and specifically focused on Tete as a problem area. The bulletin estimated that there are now at least 1,000 insurgents in the district and predicted that the number would double by the end of the year.

So far, FRELIMO's activities have been limited to probings of the Cabora Bassa defense perimeters, sporadic ambushes, the planting of mines along approach roads, and terrorism against the local population to discourage it from cooperating with the Portuguese. FRELIMO also hopes that its operations will frighten off foreign investors and technicians. At the present time, FRELIMO does not have the ability to mount a major offensive against Cabora Bassa, and there is little likelihood it will even be able to impede construction seriously. Harassment is likely to continue, however, and as the project progresses it will become increasingly vulnerable to sabotage, particularly when construction of power lines and substations begins.

#### *The Portuguese Strike Back*

In June 1970, Portuguese authorities, alarmed by FRELIMO's ability to extend its operations and dissatisfied with the pace of counterinsurgency, initiated their first major offensive into guerrilla territory. The campaign was centrally coordinated from headquarters in Nampula, and was personally directed by the new commander in Mozambique, General Kaulza de Arriaga.

The primary goal of the offensive—Operation "Gordian Knot"—was to seize and hold FRELIMO base camps and to cut infiltration and supply routes, particularly in the Mueda Plateau area of Cabo Delgado. For the first time, helicopters were used on a large scale in order to give the Portuguese forces greater mobility. Official Portuguese communiqués claimed that Gordian Knot extended to the Tanzanian border and involved between 35,000 and 40,000 men; probably less than half were combat troops, however.

Whatever the number of troops actually involved, the offensive did seize several major insurgent camp areas in Cabo Delgado and interdicted numerous supply routes. From June to the end of the dry season in October 1970, the Portuguese claimed they destroyed 25 guerrilla base camps, killed or captured 1,000 guerrillas, and seized 40 tons of supplies. Although these figures may have been inflated, it is clear that the offensive, temporarily at least, disrupted FRELIMO operations in Cabo Delgado, interrupted the flow of supplies to other areas, and forced the insurgents to give up a part of their already limited territory.

Early in May 1971, the Portuguese resumed their offensive into Cabo Delgado, Niassa, and Tete districts in an attempt to offset any gains FRELIMO might have made during the wet season lull. As with last year's campaign, the major

SECRET



SECRET

25X1

**Samora Machel**

Samora Machel, a close confidant of the late Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, was elected president of FRELIMO by its central committee in May 1970. He has been commander of its army since 1966, and was a member of the ruling triumvirate established shortly after Mondlane's assassination. Born in southern Mozambique in 1934, Machel failed to finish secondary school. He met Mondlane in 1961 and joined FRELIMO in 1963. After military training in Algeria, he returned to Dar es Salaam to organize and train the group of guerrilla fighters that entered Mozambique in September 1964. According to US officials in Tanzania, Machel is a respected military commander, and spends the greater part of his time in the field.

**General Kaulza Oliveira de Arriaga**

Army General Arriaga, commander in chief of the armed forces in Mozambique since March 1970, has given new drive to counterinsurgency operations in Mozambique. Unlike his predecessors, who anchored themselves firmly to their desks, he shows himself in the field and has walked away from at least one helicopter crash in the bush. Now 56, Arriaga was instrumental a decade ago in the modernization of the Portuguese Air Force and played a key role in the development of a military air transport service linking the metropole with the overseas provinces. Known for his political flexibility and astuteness, as well as for his military competence, Arriaga is frequently mentioned as a future minister of defense and possible presidential prospect; troop command and African service are generally considered prerequisites for these positions.



thrust is into Cabo Delgado, where the Portuguese have pushed out from positions they seized last year. The Portuguese have again claimed that they are inflicting heavy casualties on the guerrillas and that FRELIMO operations in northeast Mozambique have been severely disrupted.

In conjunction with the military drive, the Portuguese are also waging a determined psychological action program designed to demoralize the insurgents and cut them off from the population. The major focus of this program is to establish village clusters where the population of an insurgent area can be relocated. Called "aldeamentos," most of these villages are provided with their own defense militia and are situated near roads to

permit rapid assistance by Portuguese forces if attacked.

This network of villages has denied FRELIMO access to much of the population for purposes of recruitment, subversion, and supply. There are about 300 aldeamentos in Cabo Delgado and Niassa, and some 60 in Tete. Although population figures are closely held by the Portuguese, US officials in the province have estimated that the aldeamentos in Cabo Delgado and Niassa contain about 90 percent of the roughly 850,000 people in the two districts. The program in Tete is not doing as well, and Portuguese officials have admitted that it is at least six months behind schedule.

Special Report

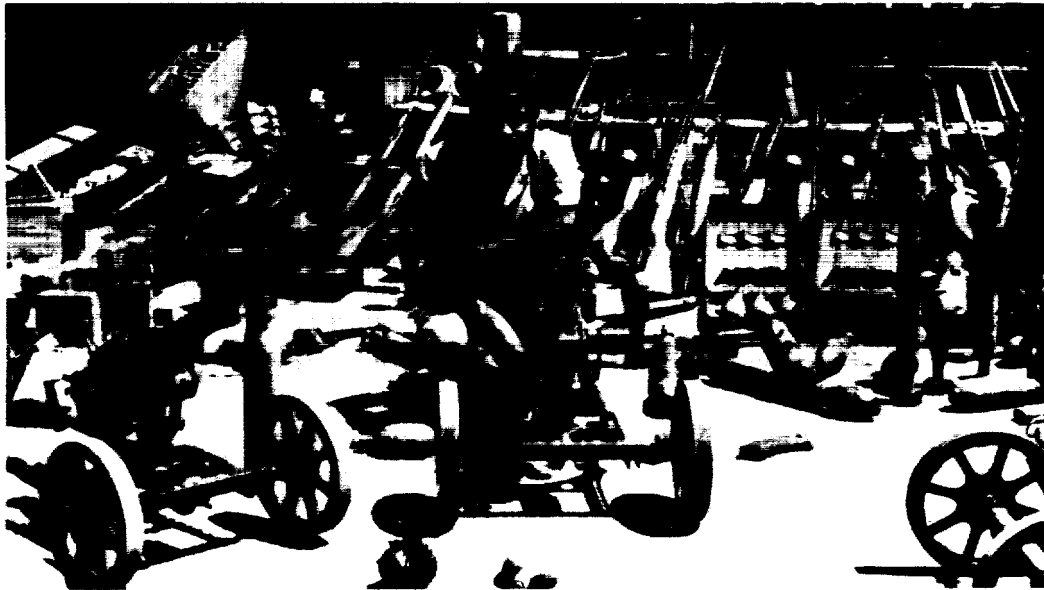
- 7 -

13 August 1971

SECRET

SECRET

25X1



Captured FRELIMO weapons

The government has also had a measure of success with its "open arms" policy, which offers land and food to refugees who return to Mozambique or come out of hiding in the bush. In addition, the authorities offer money to insurgents who defect and bring their arms with them. In order to foster allegiance to the metropole, military units provide medical and educational facilities to the local population. All these programs suffer from a general lack of resources, however.

destroying these bases, the war is likely to drag on interminably.

Tanzania has been the most fervent supporter of FRELIMO ever since President Nyerere allowed it to establish headquarters in Dar es Salaam and a major training base at Nachingwea. In addition to allowing FRELIMO use of Tanzanian territory, Nyerere also permits logistical support.

25X1  
25X1

#### *The Regional Context*

The Portuguese regard external support as the primary factor sustaining the insurgency. FRELIMO's use of Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi for sanctuary, supply, and staging has in fact been a major stumbling block to Portuguese counter-insurgency efforts. Lisbon recognizes, however, that unless it is willing to accept the international furor and pressures that would result from

Tanzania, with access to the sea, can afford to be more independent in its support for FRELIMO than can landlocked Zambia and Malawi, both of which are dependent on Mozambique for rail and port facilities. This dependence has often led to strained relations between Portugal and Zambia. Since mid-1966, there have been sporadic, occasionally serious incidents along the

Special Report

- 8 -

13 August 1971

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

border. Attempts to reach agreement on border integrity have been hampered by mutual suspicions and recriminations. The Portuguese on several occasions have temporarily closed their railroads to Zambian use in retaliation for guerrilla operations from Zambia. Relations have been further strained by occasional Portuguese incursions into Zambian territory, either in pursuit of insurgents or in reprisal for guerrilla raids.

Malawi, in order to maintain its credentials in black Africa, has also allowed certain privileges to FRELIMO, but it has not gone as far as Zambia or Tanzania because of President Banda's policy of open cooperation with the white-minority ruled states. Banda has given FRELIMO permission to establish offices and rest facilities and to transit Malawi's territory. On the other hand, in order to avoid antagonizing the Portuguese, he has put strict limitations on the group, including the prohibition of armed raids from Malawi and the transportation of arms through the country. Despite these bans, FRELIMO has continued to use remote border regions for staging areas, but it has done so on a limited scale so as not to jeopardize its position in Malawi.

Beset by the militant black African states, the Portuguese in Mozambique have had to look south for moral and political support. Although they have carefully tried to avoid identification with the blatant racial policies of white-ruled South Africa and Rhodesia, which conflict with their own professed multiracial attitudes, the Portuguese have found one common bond with white southern Africa. All three countries view themselves as forming the last bastion against Communist subversion in Africa, and both South Africa and Rhodesia are acutely aware of the insurgency in Mozambique. Also, South Africa has a special interest in the outcome of the war because of its deep involvement in the Cabora Bassa project and its interest in keeping the Portuguese territories in Lisbon's hands as a buffer zone.

Assistance from South Africa and Rhodesia has been limited thus far, however.

25X1

several British-designed Vampire jets have been supplied by South Africa for Portuguese use. Rhodesia has provided limited air support for Portuguese operations in Tete, both in the form of aerial reconnaissance and air-to-ground strikes. In addition, Rhodesia had a small detachment of ground troops in Tete for a short time over the turn of the year when it became apparent that insurgent activity there was increasing.

Neither South Africa nor Rhodesia is likely to become too deeply involved in helping the Portuguese, however, so long as Lisbon appears able to hold its own. Moreover, there are no indications that Portugal desires any substantial support from these countries because it would tie Lisbon closer to Pretoria and Salisbury at a time when the racial policies of those two capitals are under strong attack.

#### *What Lies Ahead?*

The insurgency shows every indication of grinding along for a long time to come. Neither the Portuguese nor FRELIMO appears capable of achieving military victory in the foreseeable future. Although the Portuguese are exhibiting a new-found aggressiveness under General Arriaga, "final victory" rests on depriving FRELIMO of its external support and foreign sanctuaries. An all-out drive in this direction is unlikely because Portugal's human and economic resources are limited and are already spread thin by three African insurgencies. Moreover, Lisbon sees no real need to go for a total victory so long as the insurgents are contained in the far north.

For the most part, the Portuguese military is prepared for a drawn-out struggle. Within the junior officer corps, however, there are signs of restiveness over the poor prospects for a permanent solution and the continued disruption of

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

personal lives. Although morale within the military appears to be generally high—and the Portuguese commitment to the African provinces is strong—protracted conflict could lead to serious disgruntlement over the long term.

Fortunately for the Portuguese, FRELIMO has failed to take hold as a broad, popular-based nationalist movement. Although it enjoys the sympathies of many Mozambican refugees in Tanzania and Zambia, within Mozambique itself it has access to less than ten percent of the country's 300,000 square miles and controls less than three percent of the country's population of over 7.5 million. It has virtually no organization in the southern part of the country nor in the main population centers or urban areas.

FRELIMO's effectiveness also has been undercut somewhat by internal disagreements. The proud and fierce Makonde tribesmen of northern Mozambique, who have traditionally made up close to 90 percent of FRELIMO's fighting force, resent their lack of proportional representation in FRELIMO's policy-making circle. Although Makonde resentment is less now than in early 1969, when a tribal elder who was a member of the central committee defected to the Portuguese, ill-feelings still exist. This contributes to a general sense of unease within the FRELIMO hierarchy, and may have a dampening effect on FRELIMO's ability to take stronger action.

To its advantage, however, FRELIMO enjoys a virtual monopoly in the insurgency game and is likely to continue so for the foreseeable future. Its closest competitor, the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee (COREMO), formed in 1965 and based in Zambia, is light years away in both numbers and external support. With a total strength of less than 1,000, it has limited itself to modest, one-shot cross-border operations ever since it was squeezed out of Tete District by FRELIMO in 1968. External support for COREMO has been limited and has come mainly from Zambia and Communist China. Peking was originally attracted by COREMO's pro-Maoist line, but later became disenchanted by its poor showing and for the past few years has provided only token support.

Over the long term, Portugal believes its best bet lies in keeping the insurgents off balance and restricted to the northern hinterlands, where they can slowly wither on the vine. For its part, FRELIMO's strategy is to avoid serious confrontations and simply hang on. It hopes thereby to build up a legitimate claim as the sole nationalist movement in Mozambique and the heir to the government when Portugal, through economic necessity, international pressure, and historical inevitability, is forced to give up its African "colonies."

\* \* \*

25X1

25X1

Special Report

- 10 -

13 August 1971

SECRET

**Secret**

**Secret**